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House Transportation Committee
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Mr. Chairman and Committee Members

We appreciate the opportunity to testify in opposition to HB 4632 on behalf of the members of the Great Lakes Timber Professionals Association. (GLTPA) GLTPA represents nearly one thousand members and their employees including loggers, truckers, foresters, pulp and paper mills, OSB mills, sawmills, landowners and sportsmen throughout Michigan and Wisconsin.

As currently written, HB 4632 eliminates a fair system of registration tax that has helped maintain the forest industry, one of the most significant and reliable industries in Michigan. Current registration tax recognizes three significant facts about log trucks.

Log trucks are very specialized in that they are built to haul primarily one commodity which is raw forest products. Because of the off road application they are built to a heavy standard which will accommodate the special stacking requirements needed for the transport of raw forest products. Special truck bodies are also needed to accommodate safe unloading once the log trucks reach the consuming mill.

Because of the nature of logging, weather plays a significant role as to when log trucks are operated. In any given year a log truck may be parked as much as three to four months depending on the length of spring thaw and yearly rain conditions. This is in comparison to a highway truck application where weather is seldom a factor because off road conditions do not apply.

Lastly, log trucks can spend anywhere from thirty five to fifty percent of work time off road. Tree harvesting often involves long forest roads which are built to minimize the impact on the environment while providing an adequate route for forest product removal.

For the reasons stated it is imperative a registration fee structure including the Log/Farm Plate registration tax remain in place. Given the circumstances under which log trucks operate it seems appropriate to maintain the fair registration tax structure system already in place.

Because we realize the need to support Michigan's road system we are suggesting an equal tax increase across all categories and we are also suggesting safeguards be put in place to eliminate any abuse of the Log/farm Plate.

Sincerely,

Mark Huempfer, GLTPA Board President

Henry Schienebeck, GLTPA Executive

Director